

# March 2011

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **1. Is Fort Meade eligible for the Mass Transit Subsidy?**

**ANSWER:** Yes, employees reporting to Fort Meade will be eligible to receive a subsidy from the Mass Transit Benefits Program. However, benefits will no longer be processed by Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) — the organization who currently manages the distribution of benefits to our employees in the National Capital Region. If you apply for benefits through WHS, with a Duty Station of Ft Meade, your application will be rejected

DMA is working to ensure uninterrupted benefits for eligible employees, and will distribute guidance to the workforce once they have determined how the program will be administered. For additional information, please contact David O'Connor, 703 428-1102

#### **2. Will DMA offer transportation from locations in Virginia to Fort Meade?**

**ANSWER:** DMA as an organization will not offer transportation.

However, we are working with various entities, i.e., DISA, MD State organizations, and private entities, which recognize transportation and commuter issues affect a significant portion of employees and we are continuously exploring options.

Currently, DISA continues to form vanpools and they have established one subscription bus from northern VA (locations and schedule may change based on demand). DMA will work with them to take advantage of their efforts. The bus is a luxury coach with Wifi connectivity, comfortable seating, and a restroom facility. Commuters can relax, enjoy their morning coffee, read the paper, or even take a nap during the commute. As a rider, you are only committed on a month-to-month basis. The price will vary depending on where you live. DMA federal employees can use their Mass Transit subsidy to defray some of the cost.

More information will be provided DMA employees as it becomes available. We plan to have a mini Relocation Fair on 3 Mar 2011 and transportation will be one of the major focal points to be addressed. The website [www.meaderide.com](http://www.meaderide.com) has information that may be helpful.

### **3. Will shuttle service be available from MARC and/or Metro to Ft Meade?**

**ANSWER:** Yes, limited shuttle service will be available. A shuttle service (2 buses) will operate from the Odenton MARC station in the a.m. and p.m. “rush hours” – first shuttle starting at 6:20 and last shuttle leaving Odenton 8:52 (approximately 10 minute ride each way). This same shuttle will also provide service around the installation during the day. A separate shuttle bus is operating from Greenbelt Metro to Ft Meade – currently only one shuttle is departing from Greenbelt Metro at 0630 and departing Ft Meade in the evening at 1615.

### **4. What is Guaranteed Ride Home?**

**ANSWER:** If you carpool, vanpool, use public transportation, or bicycle or walk to work two or more days a week, Commuter Connections will get you home in the event of an emergency as part of the [Guaranteed Ride Home \(GRH\) program](#). GRH allows you peace of mind, and is regarded as an "insurance policy" in the event you experience an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime. Some restrictions apply, so be sure to read through the [GRH program participation guidelines](#). To register for the Guaranteed Ride Home program, visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) or call 1-800-745-RIDE.

### **5. If I commute from Virginia, will I be subject to Maryland State and Local Income tax?**

**ANSWER:** No, the state of Maryland is not presently considering a commuter tax.

### **6. What are the requirements for registering a vehicle in Maryland?**

**ANSWER:** Maryland law requires that motor vehicle owners must register their vehicle with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration before taking it on the road. Both new and second-hand vehicles must be registered, regardless of whether they are purchased from a dealer or an individual. In addition, new Maryland residents who have registered their vehicle in another state must register their vehicle in Maryland. The initial vehicle registration must be done in person, and registration renewals must be done annually, either in person, online or by mail or telephone.

If you are a new resident, you must register and title within 60 days. If you have recently bought a vehicle or transferred ownership, you will need to do this as soon as possible as it will enable you to drive the vehicle legally. Go to the following website for specific information.

[www.dmv.com/md/maryland/vehicle-registration](http://www.dmv.com/md/maryland/vehicle-registration)

## **7. How do I obtain a Maryland Inspection Certificate for my vehicle?**

To obtain an inspection certificate, you must have your vehicle inspected at an authorized safety inspection station in Maryland. The Maryland State Police has licensed approximately 1,600 of these facilities in all parts of the state. Most stations are authorized to inspect:

- Passenger cars;
- Light trucks and SUV's with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less; and
- Trailers that are 20 feet in length or less, without air brakes.

To be safe, always inquire whether the station has the proper authorization to inspect your vehicle.

Contact Information:

<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/About-MVA/INFO/58000ASE/58000-01T.htm>

**Maryland State Police**  
**Automotive Safety Enforcement Division (ASED)**  
6601 Ritchie Highway, NE  
Glen Burnie, MD 21062

**For Telephone Questions:**

<b>MVA Customer Service Center:</b>	1-800-950-1MVA (1682)
<b>TTY/Hearing Impaired:</b>	1-800-492-4575
<b>Out-of-State:</b>	1-301-729-4550

## **CIVILIAN PERSONNEL**

**8. Will telework be offered to DMA employees to ease the BRAC transition? How flexible can managers be with telework?**

**ANSWER:** Yes, DMA is in the process of developing a telecommuting Operating Instruction. Positions must be designated eligible for telecommuting. The eligibility of positions is determined according to functions and duties of the positions. The manager/supervisor is the final approval to allow employees to telecommute.

## **9. What is BRAC restored leave and how does it work?**

**ANSWER:** Title 5 U.S.C. 6304(d)(3) allows automatic restoration of leave earned by employees assigned to installations or organizations affected by BRAC. Annual leave earned in excess of the maximum leave accumulation permitted is stored in a separate account up to the year the position moves to the BRAC location. Leave is paid out to individuals the date they are no longer affected by BRAC and a new personnel action is finalized.

Normally, the maximum amount of accrued annual leave that may be carried forward from one leave year to another is 240 hours for employees assigned within CONUS. However, employees are authorized to carry over leave in excess of the maximum authorized amount as long as the employee continues in an employment category authorized to earn and accrue leave. BRAC-affected employees are excepted from the use or lose process requirements (i.e. scheduling and using excess leave prior to the end of the leave year.) DMA with DFAS has identified all BRAC-affected employees in their accounting/payroll system by geographic area.

Eligible employees have their excess leave reflected in a separate leave account on their Leave and Earning Statement (LES).

When an employee transfers from an installation or activity closed or realigned under BRAC to a non-BRAC installation, a lump-sum payment for unused annual leave that was restored under 5 U.S.C. 6304(d) (3) will be made if (1) the employee transfers to a position in any other department or agency of the Federal Government or (2) is reassigned to a position within DoD not located at an installation undergoing closure or realignment.

Upon completion of the BRAC realignment, employees will receive a lump sum payment for any excess leave accrued in the restored BRAC leave account. At this time, their eligibility for the BRAC restored leave will cease.

[http://www.cpms.osd.mil/ASSETS/D3336E27B7654052B655FAFEB160E26C/brac\\_faqs.pdf](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/ASSETS/D3336E27B7654052B655FAFEB160E26C/brac_faqs.pdf)

**10. If we occupy a position affected by BRAC, we are authorized to carry over annual leave in excess of 240 hours. Will this leave we are accumulating for a couple of years carry over until the time we move with our positions under BRAC, regardless of how far in advance of the particular move date the activity is scheduled to occur?**

**ANSWER:** If you are in a BRAC-affected billet, leave that you accumulate in excess of the annual statutory maximum (normally 240 hours) will be restored and placed in a separate "BRAC restored leave" account at the end of each leave year, regardless of how far in advance the particular move date is.

**11. How are employees compensated for their BRAC restored leave? Do they receive a lump-sum payout at the time of their move, or can the leave be retained in a restored account?**

**ANSWER:** Employees who continue to occupy the position that is affected by BRAC until the move to the new location retain the leave in a separate BRAC restored leave account until the move. At that point, they are paid a lump-sum amount for all leave that has accumulated in their BRAC restored leave account. If, before the move, an employee transfers to a position in any other department or agency of the Federal Government, or moves to a position within DOD that is not located at an installation undergoing closure or realignment, he or she will also receive a lump-sum payout of his or her accumulated BRAC restored leave.

**12. When BRAC restored leave is paid out in a lump sum, is it paid out at the current rate or the rate at which the leave was earned?**

**ANSWER:** Payment of the lump-sum amount of BRAC restored leave is at the current rate at the time of payment.

**13. Does an employee have the option to use BRAC leave presently instead of waiting for the actual move and lump sum payout at the time of the move or departure from DOD?**

**ANSWER:** BRAC leave is annual leave that has been automatically restored at the end of a leave year to an employee. BRAC restored leave is placed in a separate leave account from the employee's regular annual leave account and BRAC restored leave may be used prior to the BRAC move upon the employee's request and the supervisor's approval.

**12. I am in a high step of grade GS-15 and I have already accumulated a lot of BRAC restored leave. When my BRAC restored leave account is paid out in a lump sum, will the payout be subject to the annual limitation on pay, or will I be able to receive the entire lump sum at once?**

**ANSWER:** The Office of Personnel Management has informed DMA, through the DoD Civilian Personnel Management Service, that BRAC restored leave lump-sum payouts are excluded from the aggregate compensation limitation found in Title 5, United States Code 5307. That means you will receive your BRAC restored leave in one lump-sum payout, regardless of how much salary and other compensation you have earned in the year of the payout, and regardless of the amount of your BRAC restored leave lump-sum payout.

**14. Will civilians see any differences or are there any positive actions they will have to take to continue to be paid IF they are NOT changing anything except their work location?**

**ANSWER:** Civilians in the National Capital Region will receive a Request for Personnel Action and a SF-50 changing their duty location to Ft. Meade, Maryland. IF they have BRAC restored leave, it will be paid the time of the Personnel Action. Otherwise, there will be no change in their rate of pay.

## **MILITARY PERSONNEL**

**15. How will the relocation to Fort Meade affect a military member's BAH?**

**ANSWER:** According to the DoD Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee, the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is based on geographic duty location, pay grade, and dependency status. Although the procedure is slightly different for each service, members who choose not to relocate their residence [home] will be eligible to request a waiver to allow them to keep their current rate of BAH until they PCS, separate, or retire. Those members, who choose to relocate, have HHG moved at government expense, or report to DMA after the relocation will assume the new Fort Meade rate. BAH rates for all locations can be found at: <http://perdiem.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/bah.html>

**16. Since DMA will relocate to Fort Meade, will the servicing personnel centers change?**

**ANSWER:** All servicing personnel centers will change during the Agency relocation. In fact, all military members will have direct service-specific support on Fort Meade. Army will have HQ Company support and Personnel Support Division (PSD) servicing on the main post. Air Force personnel will be serviced by personnel support entities on the NSA compound; as a result, they will be required to acquire a yellow NSA badge to access their support agencies. Marine Corps personnel will be serviced by Marine Detachment, Fort Meade. Navy personnel will be serviced by the Personnel Support Detachment located in the same building on the main post as the Army PSD.

## **HOUSING**

**17. What is the current on-post housing situation at Fort Meade?**

**ANSWER:** Fort Meade offers Family Housing, Bachelor Housing, Transient Housing, and Off-Post Housing assistance. For more information on all of Fort Meade's Housing services visit: <http://www.ftmeade.army.mil/pages/rci/housing.html>.

### **18. Who is eligible for on-post housing?**

**ANSWER:** Fort Meade on-post housing is open to military members from all branches of the military. Active duty military members have priority and are eligible for Privatized Family Housing at Fort Meade if you are an active duty service member assigned to an installation within 50 miles of Fort Meade. Contact the Ft Meade Housing offices at (301) 677-7748 or Picerne Military Housing (410) 305-1258 ([www.meadepicerne.com](http://www.meadepicerne.com)) for more information.

### **19. Is on post housing available to DOD civilians and military retirees?**

**ANSWER:** Military retirees and civilian federal employees are eligible for on-post housing when space is available. Contact the Ft Meade Housing offices at (301) 677-7748 or Picerne Military Housing (410) 305-1258 ([www.meadepicerne.com](http://www.meadepicerne.com)) for more information.

### **20. When can military personnel sign up for the Fort Meade housing wait list?**

**ANSWER:** DMA and Picerne Military Housing, Fort Meade's military housing manager, have established an agreement that will allow DMA's BRAC-affected military personnel to apply to the Fort Meade on-post housing waitlist 150 days before arrival (date on their orders).

This is a variation from the typical policy in which military members cannot apply to the housing list more than 60 days prior to their orders date to Fort Meade.

DMA personnel assigned after the BRAC process will follow the traditional 60-day policy.

Personnel who are offered a house and choose not to take it will follow the same policies as all *military members assigned to Fort Meade follow regarding not accepting a home.*

### **21. If I reside in on post housing, can I allow someone other than my immediate family members to live with me?**

**ANSWER:** No, allowing anyone other than your immediate family to reside with you would be considered having "an unauthorized guest" or "subletting" and housing policy does not allow such an arrangement. You may apply for a waiver which may be considered in extreme circumstance.

## **CHILD/FAMILY CARE**

### **22. Is child care available on post?**

**ANSWER:** Yes. Fort Meade offers three child development centers as well as the Family Child Care Provider program. Active duty military personnel, Department of Defense civilians, Reservists and National Guard soldiers on active duty status and Fort Meade DoD contractors

are eligible for the child care services offered. Fort Meade leadership is working to plan for increased demand on child care facilities due to impending BRAC relocations to the area. For more information call (301) 677-1160 or the Child and Youth Service's Central Reservations at (301) 677-1149. Information on all the services offered by Fort Meade's Child and Youth Services can be found at: <http://www.ftmeademwr.com/cyss.php>.

**23. Are the schools for school-aged children located on or off post?**

**ANSWER:** : There are seven schools located on Fort Meade that accommodate children from kindergarten through 12th grade and fall under the jurisdiction of the Anne Arundel County Public School System. There are additional feeder schools located off post to accommodate additional elementary school aged children. In conjunction with the Child and Youth Services Division, a School Liaison Officer has been established on Fort Meade. The School Liaison Officer (SLO) acts as a communication link between the installation and the surrounding school districts. The SLO advocates for military families in a variety of areas within the school system to include home school and special needs children. For more information about schools and the liaison services offered, call (301) 677-1227, or visit their Web site at: <http://www.ftmeademwr.com/cyss/sls.ph>

**24. What documentation is required to enter a child into the Fort Meade or Maryland public school system?**

**ANSWER:** Basic documentation includes: birth certificate; SSN; child's military ID; immunization records; report card; copy of school transcript; and, IEPs for students with special needs. Depending on what county you reside in, the documentation required may be slightly less or more. To ensure your child has a smooth transition to their new school, contact the School Liaison Officer at (301) 677-1227 for more information.

**25. What is the Exceptional Family Member Program?**

**ANSWER:** The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) is a Department of Defense mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated medical, educational, housing, community support, and personnel services to Families with special needs.

**25. Who is an Exceptional Family Member?**

**ANSWER:** An Exceptional Family Member is a Family member (child or adult) with any physical, emotional, developmental, or intellectual disability that requires special treatment, therapy, education, training, or counseling.



## **26. Who do I contact to learn more about the EFMP?**

**ANSWER:** POC's numbers are as follows: Army: 301-677-4122/4473/8435; Navy: 301-677-9017; Air Force: 240-857-6079, 301-981-7088/7087/9211; USMC: 703-693-5353/4172; Coast Guard: 202-372-4083.

## **SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT**

### **27. Are there programs to help my spouse find employment?**

**ANSWER:** For those employees whose spouses will be seeking jobs in Maryland, contact Denise Bice, who is the Workforce Specialist assigned to Fort Meade. Her contact information is as follows:

Fort Meade Outreach Center  
4432 Llewellyn Avenue  
Fort Meade, Maryland 20755  
Phone: (410) 674-6509  
Fax: (410) 672-3543  
Email: [dbice@dllr.state.md.us](mailto:dbice@dllr.state.md.us)  
[cid:image001.gif@01CA726A.116A00E0](#)

Also, The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) provides employment assistance and workforce development services for family members of transitioning DMA employees. For more information, please contact Thomas Smith, Maryland Transition Coordinator at (443) 545-4603 or [thsmith@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:thsmith@howardcountymd.gov). You may also visit the [DLLR jobs website — Maryland Workforce Exchange](#)

[Click HERE to see job openings for Fort Meade and all Army installations on the Army's Vacancy Announcement Board](#)